

REPORT OF THE PLANNING BOARD 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

The Planning Board meets regularly on the second and fourth Monday of each month. During re-organization after the May election, David Robbins was chosen by the Board to serve as Chairman, Justin Wood as Vice-Chairman, and Linda Hassinger as Clerk.

In 2021, the Planning Board met twenty-six (26) times, twenty-three (23) of which were regular meetings. The Board held forty-eight (48) public hearing sessions, a significant decrease from the previous year's (107). The Planning Board held one (1) joint meeting with the Select Board.

In 2021, permit/application review remained relatively busy for the Planning Board. The following is a summary by application type:

Special Permits (<i>new in 2021 & carried over from 2020</i>):	10
Special Permits (<i>opened in 2020; still open as of 1/2022</i>):	2
Special Permits (<i>modification of previous approval</i>):	4
Preliminary Subdivision Plans (<i>new</i>):	2
Definitive Subdivision Plans (<i>new</i>):	0
Definitive Subdivision Plans (<i>mod. of previous approval</i>):	0
Definitive Subdivision Plans (<i>default/on-going</i>):	0
Definitive Subdivision Plans (<i>rescinded</i>):	0
Site Plan Review (<i>not associated with Special Permit</i>):	1
Site Plan Review (<i>mod. of previous approval</i>):	2
Approval Not Required Plans:	8
Scenic Road Permits:	0
Scenic Road Permits (<i>mod. of previous approval</i>):	0
Determination of Completeness for Subdivision:	0
Request for Determination (<i>Cellular Facilities</i>):	0
Request for Determination of Minor Modification	14
Project Plan Review (<i>Tufts</i>):	<u>1*</u>
TOTAL	44

**Tufts Campus Master Plan Review*

Twelve (12) Special Permits were reviewed, new, and carried over from 2020. Special Permits were granted for the following projects: one (1) for two-family dwellings; one (1) multi-family; five (5) for an accessory apartment; one (1) artist live-work studio; one (1) marijuana establishment; one (1) for pesticide treatment in the Water Supply Protection Overlay District; and one (1) mixed use development. One (1) Major Residential Special Permits was reviewed and approved.

Four (4) existing Special Permits were modified – one (1) for a change in ownership of an approved marijuana establishment; one (1) for addition of manufacturing equipment at an existing facility; one for change in ownership and site modifications at an existing waste to feed facility (1) ; and one (1) to add a backup generator at an existing wireless facility. A total of eight (8) Approval Not Required Plans were submitted to and reviewed by the Board in 2020, all of which were endorsed. The Planning Board also issued six (6) Temporary Determinations of Minor Modifications for outdoor seating to allow local restaurants to better comply with the Governor's Mandates regarding COVID-19.

Monitoring and various work items pertaining to seven (7) subdivisions continued throughout the year – Brookmeadow Village (off Providence Road), Gristmill Village (off Pleasant Street), Fieldstone Farms (Meadow Lane), Grafton Hill (off North Street), Dendee Acres (off Elmwood Street), Highfields of Grafton (Magill Drive), and Bull Meadow (off Appaloosa Drive).

During 2021, the Planning Board spent a considerable amount of time on proposed amendments to the Town's Subdivision Rules and Regulations. At the Spring Town Meeting held on June 5, 2021, the Planning Department sponsored the following article, which was approved by the Town Meeting with a two-thirds majority:

Article 41, To see if the Town will vote to allow the Select Board to dispose of the real property at 17 & 27 Upton Street, known as the DPW Garage & Wood Barn, pursuant to M.G.L. c.30B, under such terms and conditions as it deems to be in the best interests of the Town.

Throughout 2021, the Planning Board continued to work on various short and long-range planning projects with the Planning Department and other departments, boards and committees. Projects included:

- Drafting a Request for Proposals to update the Grafton Comprehensive Plan.
- The Town Planner, Planning Board and Select Board drafted and adopted a Complete Streets Policy in relation to completing Tier I program status. The Select Board voted to adopt the Policy on October 5, 2021. The Policy was reviewed and approved by MassDOT on November 12, 2021 and received a total score of 97 out of 100. The Town is now eligible for Tier II funding and anticipates application in April 2022.
- The Town Planner and Planning Board's representative to the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee worked with the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee to update and begin implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Town contracted with the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) to prepare the Plan. The Plan was

completed in 2020 with revisions required by the State to be completed in early 2021.

- The Town Planner and Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Committee worked to update the Grafton Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Town contracted with Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) to prepare the Plan. The Plan is anticipated to be completed in early 2022.
- The Town Planner, Planning Board and Select Board coordinated to complete the Local Rapid Recovery Plan (LRRP), which focuses on assisting local businesses recover from impacts of COVID-19. The Town contracted with KARP Strategies, LLC to prepare the Plan. The Town Planner and Planning Board are now coordinating on implementation of the Plan.
- The Planning Department worked with other members of the Municipal Center staff and the Town Administrator to continue development of the Town's web site and Geographic Information System (GIS). Project information and Planning Board meeting materials web pages continue to be a major benefit to the public and staff alike.
- Development Team: Planning Department Staff participates in weekly meetings where residents, businesses, and developers can meet informally to discuss potential projects and receive feedback and guidance.
- During 2021, the Planning Department continued to provide support to the Affordable Housing Trust and two working subcommittees – *Community Preservation Committee*, *Historical Commission*.
- Staff continued to work with representatives from the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine / Tufts University to support development activities at the Grafton Science Park including meeting with prospective buyers and real estate agents interested in development at the park.
- The part-time Economic Development Coordinator worked with the Economic Development Commission to identify opportunities for encouraging economic growth in the Town. Staff and Board members attended numerous meetings with local and state officials and legislators to encourage economic development within Grafton. Staff continue to refine marketing materials, attend meetings and expositions to support economic development, and implement the "Shop Grafton" campaign to support small, home-grown businesses. In addition, the Economic Development Coordinator provided additional outreach and support to local businesses impacted by COVID-19.
- The Economic Development Coordinator continued working with Town Administrator to re-develop 8 Pine Street, consisting of 8.8 acres at the former Grafton State Hospital, as a transit-oriented development. In addition, the Economic Development Coordinator continued working with Town Administrator to re-develop 27 Upton Street.

The Planning Board encourages use of the Planning Department website at www.grafton-ma.gov to view and download application materials of proposed developments, as well as other current information on planning initiatives.

Looking ahead to 2022, the Board and Department will continue to consider new development applications and oversee construction activities. The Board and Department continue to coordinate with hybrid and remote meetings as necessary, to ensure meetings remain accessible and safe given current health guidelines and will continue to encourage projects that make significant progress on the Subsidized Housing Inventory and Grafton's overall housing goals.

Two important goals for the Board in 2022 are to finalize a zoning amendment to foster redevelopment of historic mills and to update the Grafton Comprehensive Plan, which has not been updated since 2001. The Board will continue to focus on short and long-term planning efforts that address development issues and concerns facing Grafton, with specific attention to the implementation of the South Grafton Villages Master Plan, opportunities to update the Comprehensive Plan, and encourage development opportunities in North Grafton, on Worcester Street, and in town village areas.

In addition to their regular duties, Planning Board members volunteer on other committees to improve inter-board communication and promote smart growth for the Town:

Delegates to CMRPC: Bob Hassinger, currently CMRPC Chairman, and Prabhu Venkataraman

Open Space Committee: Dave Robbins, currently Vice-Chairman

Community Preservation Committee: Justin Wood

Library Planning and Building Committee: Prabhu Venkataraman

Housing Authority: Dave Robbins

Grafton Center Study Committee: Robert Hassinger, Linda Hassinger

PAYMENTS IN EXCESS OF \$1,000.00

PLANNING BOARD –Calendar Year 2021

Central MA Regional Planning Association (FY22) \$5,344.96

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher McGoldrick, Town Planner
Grafton Planning Board